

Print Edit Other 1/11
 SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
 EXPRESS

M. 66,920
 S. 107,543

MAY 7 1961

Keeping Proper Secrets And Getting Those Of The Enemy a Big Job

The President turned to two vexing but vital problems last week: the competence of our spy system and the responsibility of our press.

Of the press, he asked self-restraint. Of the intelligence service, he asked a thorough review.

The recurring questions about the super-secret CIA appear to justify the study of its performance. If, as the reports persist, the CIA missed its calculations of the Cuban situation, the public needs to know why.

Dr. James R. Killian, who was trouble-shooter for President Eisenhower, is a capable man for the job of looking into the agency. He is not running for office and, almost automatically, can be trusted to do the kind of job that is required.

As for the suggested self-censorship by the press, we assume the President was trying to be helpful. It seems, however, that in a cold war—largely a battle of ideas and salesmanship—it is essential that the public be adequately and competently informed. The President referred specifically to "covert preparations to counter the enemy's covert operations." We assume he meant the Cuban matter. This gets into a matter of policy and the public is entitled to know what public policy is.

It is the admitted responsibility of the press to honor the needed secrecy of military techniques and the like. The press is aware that secrets can be kept if those charged with keeping them will do it.

It is also aware of a public responsibility to probe and keep probing, disclose and keep disclosing, knowing by its long history that competent, thorough and aggressive news reporting is the uncompromising servant of the nation's interest.

Mr. Kennedy has properly taken the initiative to remind editors of their responsible positions and his own responsibility to deal with candor on public matters. In that situation, he can get cooperation on matters of national security. But he cannot get—and he did not ask, to his credit—a security black-out to cover monetary embarrassments to the government.